PENDING CLAIMS

Claims 1-21 (Cancelled).

22. (Previously Presented) A method for storing previously recorded sets of audio tracks in a compressed format in at least one memory device and for later retrieving the set of audio tracks in the compressed format, and for converting the set of audio tracks retrieved in the compressed format into a set of signals in an uncompressed format suitable to be played to sound the respective audio-tracks, the method comprising:

transferring a plurality of sets of audio tracks in the uncompressed format from a first storage device to a second storage device, without compression, and storing the set of audio tracks in the uncompressed format in the second storage device;

compressing the set of audio tracks transferred to and stored in the second storage device in the uncompressed format into the compressed format;

storing the set of audio tracks in the compressed format in the second storage device; and

upon receiving a request for an audio track to be played, retrieving the set of audio tracks in the compressed format and decompressing the set of audio tracks retrieved into signals in the uncompressed format suitable to be played to sound the audio track, wherein the compressing and the decompressing are performed according to a predetermined priority in which decompressing the set of audio tracks retrieved in the compressed format takes priority over compressing a set of audio tracks transferred in the uncompressed format from the first storage device.

Claim 23 (Cancelled).

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22 comprising retrieving respective sets of audio tracks in the compressed format only after the respective set of

audio tracks in the uncompressed format has been completely transferred to the second storage device, wherein the compressing comprises compressing each set of audio tracks in the uncompressed format that has been retrieved.

Claim 25 (Cancelled).

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22 wherein the compressing comprises compressing the set of audio tracks to MP3 format.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein

the transferring of sets of audio tracks in the uncompressed format comprises storing more than one set of audio tracks in the uncompressed format in the second storage device, and

the retrieving of sets of audio tracks in the uncompressed format and the compressing of each set of audio tracks in the uncompressed format that is retrieved comprises retrieving one set of audio tracks at a time in the uncompressed format and compressing one set of audio tracks at a time into the compressed format.

28. (Previously Presented) A system for receiving sets of signals in an uncompressed format stored on a removable storage device, converting the sets of signals in the uncompressed format to sets of digital signals in a compressed format, and storing the sets of digital signals in the compressed format in at least one memory device, each respective set of signals in the uncompressed format and each set of digital signals in the compressed format representing a respective audio segment, the system comprising:

an input for connecting or reading a removable storage device and through which signals read from the removable storage device are received; and

a processor coupled to a memory device and the input, the processor being programmed to:

store in the memory device a set of signals in the uncompressed format supplied to the processor through the input,

retrieve from the memory device a set of signals in the uncompressed format from the memory device,

convert the set of signals in the uncompressed format that is retrieved into a set of digital signals in the compressed format,

store the set of digital signals in the compressed format in the memory device,

make available, for future storage, memory space in the memory device in which the set of signals in the uncompressed format was stored, after that set of signals in the uncompressed format has been converted to the set of digital signals in the compressed format, and

retrieve a set of digital signals in the compressed format from the memory device and convert the set of digital signals in the compressed format that is retrieved into the uncompressed format suitable to be played to sound a corresponding audio segment, wherein the processor gives priority to converting a set of digital signals in the compressed format and retrieved from the memory device into a set of signals in the uncompressed format over converting a set of signals retrieved from the memory device in the uncompressed format into a set of signals in the compressed format.

Claims 29-31 (Cancelled).

32. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 28 wherein the processor comprises a programmed digital signal processor.

33. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 28 wherein the processor comprises a programmed digital signal processor and a programmed controller.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 28, wherein

the memory device comprises a computer readable disk, and

the processor is programmed to store sets of signals in the uncompressed format and sets of digital signals in the compressed format on the disk.

Claims 35-60 (Cancelled).

61. (Previously Presented) A method of archiving sets of audio signals comprising:

providing a memory device;

dynamically partitioning the memory device into

a first memory area for storing in the compressed format sets of audio signals,

a second memory area for storing in a compressed format sets of audio signals that have been compressed from an uncompressed set of audio signals and that are still stored in an uncompressed format in another memory area of the memory device,

a third memory area for storing, temporarily, in the uncompressed format the sets of audio signals stored in the compressed format in the second memory area, and

a fourth memory area which is a free area for storing sets of audio signals without regard to format;

under control of a processor, transferring to the memory device, from a removable storage device coupled to an input of the processor, a set of audio signals representing an audio segment, without conversion of the set of audio signals to a compressed format; and

only when the processor is not controlling accessing of an audio segment stored in the memory device, retrieving a set of the audio signals transferred to the memory device without conversion to the compressed format, converting the set of audio

signals retrieved into the compressed format, and storing the set of audio signals in the compressed format in the second memory area of the memory device.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61 wherein converting the set of audio signals retrieved comprises converting at a rate in a range of from one to two times real time.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 62 wherein the processor comprises a digital signal processor.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61 comprising erasing from the memory device the set of audio signals transferred to memory device without conversion to the compressed format, after conversion of the set of audio signals to the compressed format, and storing the set of audio signals in the compressed format in the memory device, thereby making available, for future storage, memory space of the third memory area in the memory device in which the set of audio signals in the uncompressed format was stored, after that set of audio signals has been compressed into the compressed format, by transferring that memory space from the third memory area to the fourth memory area.

Claims 65 and 66 (Cancelled).

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the memory device is further divided into a fifth memory area as a buffer area, including temporarily storing a set of audio signals in the uncompressed format in the fifth memory area and retrieving the set of audio signals from the fifth memory area for reproduction and, simultaneously, compressing the set of audio signals into the compressed format.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the predetermined priority gives priority to the transferring over the compressing.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the predetermined priority includes

only compressing the set of audio tracks when there is no pending request for an audio track to be played, and

not compressing and decompressing simultaneously.

70. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the predetermined priority includes

only converting a set of digital signals in the uncompressed format to the compressed format when there is no pending request for converting a set of digital signals into the uncompressed format suitable to be played, and

not compressing and decompressing simultaneously.